



JUVENILE REGIONAL SERVICES JOB DESCRIPTION: DEFENSE INVESTIGATOR

Juvenile Regional Services, a nonprofit law office that defends young people in Louisiana's juvenile justice system and serves as the juvenile public defender in New Orleans, seeks a skilled and committed investigator to find and develop the material that assists in defending our clients against delinquency charges. Investigators work closely with trial lawyers in JRS' multidisciplinary model of team-based advocacy. The work of investigators is carried out mostly in the field – in private homes, in schools, in businesses, and on the street – and requires creativity, perseverance, empathy, responsibility, and excellent communication skills.

Organizational Overview

Juvenile Regional Services (JRS) is a nonprofit, public-interest law office that defends young people in Louisiana's juvenile justice system.

In New Orleans, JRS is the juvenile public defender, providing holistic, dedicated, skilled, and client-directed advocacy for more than 1,000 indigent young people in the city's juvenile justice system every year. Our clients are represented by multidisciplinary teams – case managers, social workers, attorneys, and investigators – that develop and implement comprehensive advocacy plans to help children achieve their goals in court and in life.

JRS believes that every defense team member brings vital skills and viewpoints to the high-quality advocacy that our clients deserve. Our work includes representing young people in court; investigating the state's claims and developing strong defenses; helping families navigate the school system to find the right fit for each child; advocating for special education services; connecting clients with community-based services like trauma counseling, medication management, and vocational training; and arranging for young people and their families to receive government benefits. We respond to the causes and consequences of arrest, aiming to make a long-term difference in the lives of our clients.

Statewide, JRS is a leader in protecting and enhancing the right of every Louisiana child to high-quality legal representation and in advocating for systemic juvenile justice reform. We pursue our statewide objectives through strategies including direct representation of youth, policy reform, and training and technical assistance for Louisiana's juvenile defender community.

Responsibilities

Juvenile Regional Services values diversity and is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Women, people of color, people who are LGBT, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply, as are people who have personal and/or familial experience with the juvenile or criminal justice systems.

The responsibilities of defense investigators include:

- Working closely with staff attorneys and other defense team members to determine the scope, timing, and direction of defense investigation;
- Identifying, locating and interviewing state and defense witnesses;
- Taking detailed witness statements;
- Forming and maintaining positive relationships with state and defense witnesses throughout the pretrial stages of a case;
- Building and maintaining strong relationships of trust with clients and clients' support networks;
- Reviewing and analyzing discovery, including police reports and other case documentation;
- Performing background checks on relevant witnesses;
- Examining, documenting, and photographing locations where clients have been arrested or crimes have occurred;
- Preparing exhibits for trial;
- Testifying in court about work conducted in the course of investigation;
- Locating and collecting records;
- Serving subpoenas;
- Thoroughly documenting all work and all information gathered in detailed memorandum;
- Consulting with staff attorneys on investigation progress and results;
- Assisting with client intake processes;
- Regularly visiting clients at home and in custody;
- Supervising interns, AmeriCorps members, and other non-permanent staff;
- Collaborating with other JRS staff in strategic planning and implementation, and in realizing the office's mission and vision through refinement of existing projects and new project development; and
- Other projects as directed by JRS' Managing Director and Executive Director.

Investigators must perform all duties in accordance with applicable law, ethical rules, and performance standards promulgated by JRS and by the Louisiana Public Defender Board.

Investigators are directly supervised by the office's Managing Director. Investigators work as members of a defense team, and in each case conduct investigation at the direction of the team's staff attorney and report their findings to that staff attorney.

Investigators will be provided with intensive training in areas including investigative techniques; applicable law; and relevant professional, ethical, and legal rules.

Required Qualifications

- Deep commitment to the defense of indigent youth and to JRS' client-directed ethic, which recognizes that all advocacy must be driven by the expressed interests of clients;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to develop rapport with a wide range of people;
- Strong work ethic;

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- Creativity and flexibility in solving problems and meeting challenges;
- Strong analytical ability;
- Strong writing skills;
- Car ownership, or daily use of a car, with a valid driver's license and insurance;
- Willingness to submit to a background check;
- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience working with youth;
- Experience engaging, and building relationships with, strangers – for instance, community organizing, canvassing, and/or conducting interviews.
- Experience with techniques, principles, and methods used in criminal defense investigation;
- Familiarity with the geography, history, and people of New Orleans and Louisiana;
- Understanding of relevant law and of the juvenile justice system.

Compensation and Hours

The salary range for this position is \$30,000 to \$36,000 per year, depending on experience. Vacation, parental leave, and health benefits are provided. The position is full-time, and no outside, compensated work is permitted. Depending upon case and client needs, investigators can expect to be called upon to work some nights and weekends.

How to Apply

Applicants must submit: (1) a cover letter; (2) a resume or C.V., including an e-mail address and daytime and evening telephone numbers; and (3) a list of three professional references, including the name, address, telephone number and, if available, e-mail address of each.

The position will remain open until filled with a qualified applicant. We prefer to receive applications by email. Please do not call with inquiries.

Applications should be directed to:

Meghan Garvey, Managing Director
1820 St. Charles Avenue, Suite 205
New Orleans, LA 70130
jobs@jrsla.org

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